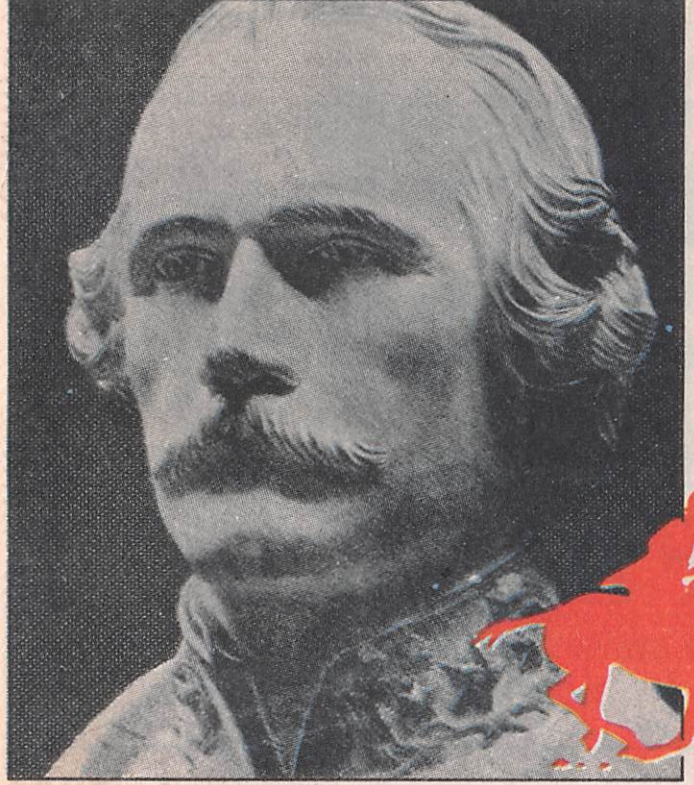
Fairfield: History and heritage

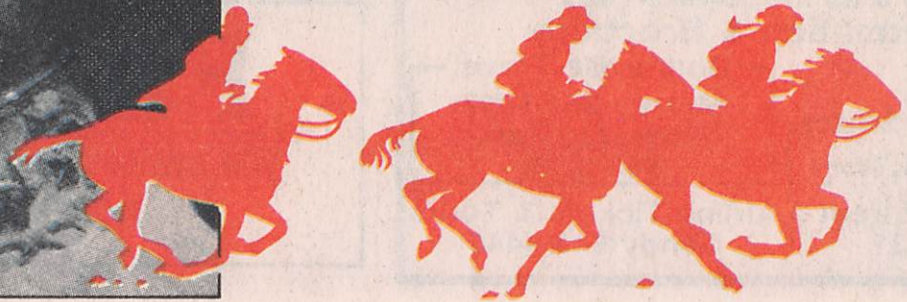
By Carma Wadley
Deseret News staff writer

In 1860 — when the Mormons had been in Utah little more than a decade and the town itself was only five years old — Fairfield was the third largest city in the Utah territory. Population hovered at around 7,000 — some 3,000 of which were soldiers.

The fates of Fairfield rose and fell with the military, in fact. In July of 1858, after Johnston's Army had marched through a vacated Salt Lake City, this little valley, now about 18 miles west of Lehi, was chosen as the site for a permanent military camp.



SIDNEY ALBERT JOHNSON AND HIS TROOPS ESTABLISHED CAMP FLOYD IN 1858.



Barracks and mess halls and stables and officers quarters were built. And on Nov. 9, as the army band played the "Star Spangled Banner" and the flag was hoisted to the top of the flagpole, the post was duly commissioned as a U.S. military outpost. It was named Camp Floyd after the then Secretary of War.

Practically overnight Fairfield became one of those "hell-roaring, wild places" of the West. Tradesmen, artisans, mechanics, "businesswomen" and a raft of saloonkeepers (there were some 17 saloons) flocked to the town, attracted by the Army payroll money — about the only actual money in the Rocky Mountains in those days.

In the midst of it all was John Carson's inn. Carson had come to the area in 1855 with his four brothers and two other men, where they built a small fort and had established a settlement. After the arrival of the Army, there was no more need for the fort. It was taken down and in its place, Carson built a two-story adobe-and-frame hotel.

Carson was an elder in the LDS church, and his inn was described as "an oasis of decency" in the wild setting. He permitted no liquor and would not even allow

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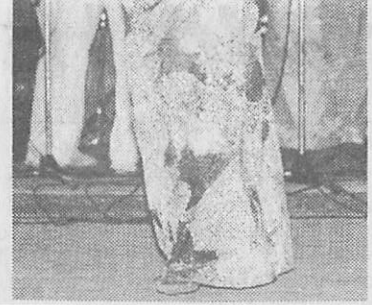

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